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Remarks by Secretary of Agriculture Bob Bergland at a meeting with staff of the U.S. Department of Agriculture--sponsored by OPEDA--The Organization of Professional Employees of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Friday, February 25, 1977 at 9:00 a.m.

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Introductory remarks by Wilbert Campbell, Jr., FmHA, Public Service Vice President for OPEDA, who told the audience that OPEDA was the professional organization for employees of the Department of Agriculture and that OPEDA has been concerned about professional employees since its inception in 1929. OPEDA has members in all states in the union from grades GS-4 through GS-18.

Mr. Campbell then introduced President of OPEDA, Richard Ford, who introduced the Secretary.

Richard Ford: "Thank you Wilbert." "How do you introduce an old friend from the Department, who has returned as our Boss of Bosses?"

"I think President Carter's comments in the patio 10 days ago about our new Secretary is the best of all introductions. The President said: 'Bob Bergland is the best man in the country for Agriculture.' I give you Mr. Secretary, Bob Bergland."

Secretary Bergland: "Thank you very much, Dick, Wilbert, members of this great organization, employees of USDA and friends all.

"It is good to be home. I spent 6 years here in the Department of Agriculture back in the 1960's, and from there I went to the Congress of the United States and spent 6 more years on the Committee on Agriculture.

"All during this time and preceding those dates, I spent all my life on the farm, and my father and my grandfather before. And so agriculture is a subject with which I am familiar. My roots are deep. I have an understanding of what this is all about and I have a great deep and profound respect for you, the employees of this really fine institution - the USDA.

"I have acquired that respect, having worked with you and observed you from a distance in the Congress of the United States. It is a respect which you have earned through your diligence and hard work. And it is my hope that we can develop an environment to improve the Department and be prepared to adapt to meet those problems, which are arising at rates beyond our wildest dreams.

"This will not be a comfortable mission for you and me because we are all creatures of habit. We're comfortable with yesterday because we've lived that. We know what that was and we would sometimes like to have tomorrow the same as yesterday. But that is not the way it will be for tomorrow is a new frontier. Tomorrow we have new opportunities and new problems. And so that which we did on yesterday may not work tomorrow.

"We, therefore, as employees and members and citizens of this great land need to be prepared to anticipate, as best we can, what may happen and govern ourselves accordingly.

"I am 48 years old. I was born July 22, 1928 on a small farm up in Northern Minnesota into a world with 2 billion other people. That world has grown to the point where today we have twice that number -- 4 billion and growing at the rate of more than 200,000 a day.

"Most of those who are born onto this globe are born poor and some say destined to be poor all their life. And at the rate the world's population is growing, it will double again in our lifetime if God gives you and me 30 more years.

"And during this period we've discovered the last new continent. We've discovered hybrid seeds. We've invented pesticides and fertilizers and applied them during my lifetime. Compared with the thousands of years of mankind, which have preceded us,

we've lived with a time that is fraught with excitement and difficulties because we have this exploding population and we see at the same time the beginning of the end of some of our non-renewable resources. We know that natural gas will end. We know that oil will end someday. We know that there are no more new continents to be discovered. We know the pressures on water resources are with limits.

"And so we see a rising demand in this world--a complicated world. One in which tensions and angers and passions are easily aroused; with food needs which we've not even anticipated. Coupling that with limited resources, we see that we must be resourceful in this Department of Agriculture. And that we are not necessarily going to be able to pursue those policies which have worked in the past. But rather we have to be inventive, innovative, and adapt to changing times.

"I am persuaded that we can do it because you men and women with scientific, clerical skills, all had a part of the development--phenomenal development we've seen in the last 30 years. And I know if we continue to apply those skills that we can meet the challenges that lie ahead.

"As Secretary, we are prepared to look at every alternative. Prepared to look at every idea, even ideas which in the past have been discarded for a variety of reasons. We want to bring them back. And we are asking you to use your innovative talents in such a way that can not only produce programs and policies that can meet the new needs as they develop, but do those things which you do so well in attempting to streamline the administration of the programs charged to us by law.

"There will be some changing in our budgeting processes. There will be some changing in our missions. You have heard some things reported in the papers about zero-based budgeting and about how and what this may mean for employees of this place. It is true that we are going to be asking you to ask yourself--Am I really busy? Am I really doing something that is useful and productive? What can be done to make my life more appreciated in this place -- the Department of Agriculture? We want to know what we can do to help you make your life more productive, to eliminate some of the waste and there is some. Obviously, we understand all of that. We are not finding fault. We're simply asking you to be innovative, to provide suggestions on ways in which we can reduce the tendency to duplicate effort and the tendency to proliferate forms and papers and procedures, some which we really don't understand either in their origin or in their end. They just seem to kind of happen in an institution as large as this.

"And so we will be examining every document. Do we really need that report? Do we really need it? I mean, really! We've done it for 40 years but is there a reason for it? Do we need those forms? Do we really have to be that complicated? Is there a way in which we can write regulations that can be understood by everybody, not just by the elite few. What kinds of things can we do to simplify this whole institution in such a way that we can produce more in ways that can be easier understood?

"We're going to be realigning government in many ways. All of which will be designed to improve the efficiency of government. Improve the delivery of those missions which have been entrusted to government by law. That in itself opens up a whole host of exciting opportunities. I'll not go into those this morning.

"I do want to announce that it will be my intention, as a matter of routine policy, to hold a one hour meeting every month with employees of this Department to discuss anything you may want to bring up. It may be more practical that we establish those employee conferences on the basis of agency alignment so that we may want to get into some shop talk. If we do want to talk about matters involving research or rural electric or farm finance or whatever, that it might be more realistic that we have agencies that have responsibilities in those general topic areas be invited to participate. But in any event, I want to make it clear that I want your advice. I need your counsel and I

need your help.

"You know more about your job than I know about your job or ever hope to learn because you are an expert in your own way. And so we hope to be able to set up a system by which your advice and your recommendations can be made available and apparent to managers, administrators and supervisors on up through the chain. We hope to be able to set up a system where your time is well spent. Where you are indeed at a work situation in which all of your talents are fully utilized. This will be no small undertaking. This will require the help of everybody. The patience of all and the willingness to adapt to new ideas and that in itself is really the test of the strength of this institution. Our capacity to be adaptable in these changing times.

"With that, I will close my portion of the program and we'll devote the time from now until 10 o'clock to a question and answer session. If I don't know the answers, I'll tell you, I don't know and I'm not here to claim I have knowledge on everything."

Employee: "Mr. Secretary, what kind of mechanism is being established in the USDA to protect those employees who may be critical of the performance of their supervisors when they are evaluated--their job--under this zero-based budgeting? This is quite a concern to a lot of people."

Secretary Bergland: "You mean when a supervisor evaluates a performance?"

Employee: "Yes, both ways. When they describe their job and say, well this job would be a lot better if it wasn't for; if it was supervised differently; if it was handled differently. Of course, this is going to cause some interaction unless there is some protection there. Chances are you aren't going to get a very honest evaluation."

Secretary Bergland: "We're going to set up some system of checks and balances so that we're certain every employee has an opportunity to speak his or her mind--hopefully in a constructive way--without fear of intimidation or reprisal. Now, we haven't exactly worked out a system yet.

"We can do it a number of ways. We can either provide for a leapfrogging arrangement, where an employee believes he or she has been disadvantaged because of prejudice or a personal relationship that is not as good as it ought to be, can take his or her complaint directly to the Administrator.

"An Administrator, obviously, is one who is generally held accountable by me for the productivity and resourcefulness of the agency involved. And so that would be one alternative.

"The other would be through some sort of internal audit or investigative mechanism which is also available to us. But we definitely want to have an appeals process by which an employee who sees something wrong can be sure he or she can bring a complaint or provide advice that may be contrary to the advice of the supervisors, so that every legitimate point of view is honestly and clearly recognized for what it is--well intentioned criticism--maybe of a supervisor.

"I had a supervisor once here so I know what that relationship is like. I've been through that, too. I've also supervised and so I know what that is like. It is a very difficult thing. It is difficult for a supervisor, oftentimes, to do a really honest job with the so-called 'performance appraisal'.

"I recall times when I was a supervisor here in which supervisors who were under my general direction were giving outstanding performance reports on employees, and then some months later would come to me and want that employee terminated.

"It didn't make sense. It tells me that the performance evaluation system doesn't work as well as it should for whatever reason. I guess we all have opinions. But we are going to examine that system to see whether or not it can't be done in a better way. Because that form may just be another one of those useless things that serves no public purpose, no real purpose. And if it doesn't serve any purpose, why do it for heavens sake? If there is a better way of consulting with employees; if there is a better way of measuring their performance; a better way of providing consultation, let's look at that, too.

"It is difficult for the supervisor and the supervised to enter into a critical environment in which a supervisor might have some unkind things to say. It is difficult then for that relationship to be maintained in a very affable fashion. And maybe if something needs to be said to an employee, we ought to have someone else do the saying.

"You know we can figure out ways like, too. Because if your relationship with your supervisor or with the supervised is not an open one; if it is one that is fraught with frustration, if tensions build and if you are afraid of your boss, that isn't really a nice place in which to work.

"On the other hand if you're a supervisor and you have an employee that is just simply not producing, but you know that as soon as you say word one, that employee is going to blow up, you've got a problem again. And so, we need to work out a system whereby we can get the word and help in a pure way rather than the old line bureaucratic type of reports and forms which I never did think was any good. But then I'm not a personnel expert, but we'll talk to some who are."

Employee: "Mr. Secretary, I'm the Federal Women's Program Coordinator for the Department, which will lead you to suspect what I am going to ask. I would like to know what your personal commitment and support is specifically to the Federal Women's Program and EEO in general?"

Secretary Bergland: "I have a wife, a mother, and 2 daughters."

Employee: "What ages are the daughters?"

Secretary Bergland: "My daughters are ages 23 and 25."

Employee: "Are they in the labor force?"

Secretary Bergland: "Yes, both of them are."

Employee: "Have they been asked can they type when they go for an employment interview?"

Secretary Bergland: "No."

Employee: "Many are."

Secretary Bergland: "I understand. This is a very difficult thing. In the first place, in the entire area of equal opportunity, I mean business. We have a civil rights enforcement group here in USDA. And you can add 800 people to it and if you don't have a commitment to civil rights, at the leadership end, you can have 9,000 people in the civil rights enforcement group and it won't work.

"My views are that everybody should be entitled to an opportunity to advance irrespective of his or her age, sex, race, color or creed. And I mean business on this one. We're holding administrators accountable. If I ever hear a complaint, a valid, legitimate

complaint, that someone has been systematically disenfranchised because of his or her sex, color, age or whatever, there is going to be serious trouble--not with the employee.

Employee: "Thank you, Mr. Secretary, that is what I wanted to hear."

Secretary Bergland: Now, having said that, may I also point out I am not one who is big on interagency task forces and commissions and committees designed to study a problem. Because, as a rule, all they ever do is study and reports are filed that are buried. It is a complete waste of time, just an exercise in futility. I'm not one who believes in that system. I believe in results, though. And they'll be manifested in many ways. I know enough about the business to know how to read those signs. So nobody plays games and we respect what you are doing. We recognize it as a very legitimate, worthwhile purpose and I honor it. I intend to do everything I can to see that your mission is fulfilled. That might put you out of a job."

Employee: "I'll work myself out of a job."

Secretary Bergland: "You'll work yourself out of a job. Alright."

Employee: "Mr. Secretary, I know that the decision has been made with regard to ceilings. I know that back in the past President Carter had gone simply with dollar figures and had not put ceilings on employment. But I understand now that the decision has been made at The White House level that we will go with ceilings rather than the dollar figure, which you can tell from the question I'm asking, I feel is not a good decision. My question is--what is the chance at the cabinet level of there being a reconsideration of that decision by The President, that we might move toward what I consider to be a more rational system of giving money, maybe, a reduced amount every year and telling the managers to manage it better? What is the opportunity for that?"

Secretary Bergland: "I happen to think that your views on this matter are right. As a matter of fact, I argued for that. But let me give it to you just straight as it is."

"We have in the federal government one million, nine hundred and fifty seven thousand employees, I think. The significance is that it is within striking distance of going over the two million mark. The two million mark will be a benchmark. And once it has been achieved; once the two million civilian employment level has been reached, there will be substantial outcry in the media."

"Sure enough, Jimmy Carter got in. Wouldn't you believe it, the Democrats are back. They are going to put everybody on the federal payroll. Look here, they've already got two million, and that is really what it is all about."

"Honestly, it would be very, very difficult for this President to announce policies that would result in a head count, going beyond the two million mark."

"Now, if we could find a way, because I think from a management prospective, I, too, believe that what I would much prefer to do is to provide managers with employment budgets within which they must work. And that budget will be sacrosanct."

"I mean there won't be the business of hiring more people and coming back next year and saying, now I've got to have these grade increases for these folks, because then we'll destroy the whole mechanism. The whole control apparatus."

"So we do have a high rate of attrition. I'm told it is 10%. I don't know if that is true. But if it is, that means we will have an opportunity to do some changes, Make some adjustments within our constraints without anybody being fired. I mean we are not going to fire anybody. There will be no reduction in force."

"But we are going to look at realignment. I suspect there are people in USDA whose talents are not utilized to the fullest. In fact, I know some. And it is frustrating. It's unhappy. It is not a fun thing to come to work and really not have much to do, at least have something to do that is far beneath your skill. And we have some highly skilled people doing rather mundane matters.

"Now, that I understand, too. I don't exactly know how to get at it. I'm too new to the job. But I know the problem exists and we're finding people, I think, who will be able to give me advice on how to deal with this question without necessarily going over the two million civilian limits which will cause a big furor.

"It is a kind of symbolic thing that we have to be aware of and it is not a pleasant thing. But we are, after all, servants of the public and we have to be aware of public attitudes. For if public attitudes should harden on us, and reaction set in in the Congress, which is a public institution. I'm in big trouble and so is Jimmy Carter, and everybody else.

"So, I'm just giving it to you straight and that is exactly what we're up against and we're trying very hard to work out some system that does what you want to do in a way that is acceptable to all concerned."

Employee: "Mr. Secretary, on the question of morale again. Are you familiar with the findings of the Civil Service survey of last year published May, 1976, of 17,000 civil service employees? I presume that USDA employees were proportionately represented.

Secretary Bergland: "No sir, I am not aware of that report. I am sorry."

Employee: "Among the disturbing results was that in the civil service, only 30% of the employees thought promotions were fair. That is across the board. In the lowest grades, only 19% thought promotions were fair. Now these are only perceptions, of course, and not necessarily reflective of reality. But I think when 81% of a sizeable segment of the workforce think promotions are unfair, it should be alarming.

"It is also a matter of record that in the last year they kept statistics, as published by the Civil Service Commission, if a civil service employee brought a discrimination complaint, on the lowest level, the chances of a decision in their favor was one in over two hundred. If they went up to the formal complaint level, their chances of a decision in their favor was one in twenty. Now, maybe, we're excessively litigious, but I find those percentages rather alarming. Could I ask you what priority do you hope to give and what concrete steps do you hope to correct these impressions of unfairness in the civil service?"

Secretary Bergland: "I must confess I have not read the report, but I will. And I don't know exactly what we should do about it. I think this will be a matter in which I am going to need your help and your advice. Probably we can work out some system through OPEDA that makes sense.

"I'm not one who believes we just promote persons on the basis of longevity. Because I lived with a system in the Congress in which one acquired power simply by growing old and that didn't work either. So we changed that and we found that when we changed it, we had an improvement. Generally, the situation improved.

"The Congress that I came into in 1970 was run by a couple dozen imperial chairmen very, very efficiently. I mean things happened very quickly. We democratized the institution and it bogged down. It talked itself to death.

"So you have to have a compromise between open public participation and decision making. They are sometimes at odds. We need to try to find that fair and reasonable middle ground. I don't know how we get at the problem you've cited, but it obviously is an important

question. I think, Dick, that this is something we ought to put on our agenda and figure out how we get at this. I'll do my best."

Employee: "Mr. Secretary, this may seem to be a rather trivial question to ask you. But I think it is relevant to some of the remarks you've been making about the bureaucracy. Now, in some divisions of Agriculture, all of the routine correspondence that goes to Congress or to The White House must be typed with perfect accuracy. That is if too is spelled to where it should be spelled too, the letter must be entirely retyped. And this means that correspondence is delayed a couple of days, perhaps, as it goes to bottom of the typing pool.

"A professional, such as myself, has to reproof the letter, somebody has to retype it. In the division where I work, alone, some people have calculated that this could cost up to \$20,000 per year in man hours for professional and clerical work. Now, what I would like to ask you is, if in your opinion, the Presidential aides and legislative assistants who actually read this correspondence that we send them would be offended to receive letters which either corrected with wite-out or were hand corrected?"

Secretary Bergland: "Corrected by hand might be a little much. The wite-out might work. I think we have a wite-out that works so well you can't tell it, haven't we? At least I've seen some letters that I think were changed with a wite-out method. I'm never quite sure. And I believe we can use that, but we want it to be professionally a work of art.

"We don't want to send sloppy work with bad english or misspelled words. I mean that isn't the way to do it. We're a high class outfit and we're going to run a high class organization. We'll be judged by some of the signs and one of those signs will be the quality of our letter writing. The quality of the regulations, some of which are not very legible, I can assure you of that. And so we want to have professional competence second to none.

"Now, we'll use those business and innovative techniques which will accomplish it and I'm not enough of a mechanic to know whether or not the wite-out system is the best way. Maybe there is a better way. If there is, let's find it.

"But I'm going to do something about our letter and mail system. You know I used to work in the area office of ASCS and I'd initial letters that I had no idea where they came from, or where there were going or why I saw them. And I get letters now as Secretary that have been initiated by 40 people. Why? You know, Why? Why does it have to take that long? Why is it necessary that everybody in the sun see what's going on?

"I mean I have nothing to hide. You can come and look at the files and read it. But it just seems to me that we have developed a paper empire around here that can stand some looking into. And I see letters coming now for my signature from technicians, and I don't know you sir, and I don't know what shop you are in--but you may have written letters that I have signed.

"The problem is that the people, technicians, experts, don't know me. They don't know my policies. They don't know who I am. They don't know what we're going to do, and so the letters are written couched in most ambiguous terms so as to not offend me, and not to offend the member of Congress who had written over and had asked a direct question.

"We go back and say, if, and, maybe, so I don't know for sure kind of thing. And I'm not finding fault. I'm saying the people who write the letters don't know me. So maybe we can find a better way.

"I want letters to be written by the professionals. By the people who do the work, not by guys like me because I don't know your work. But I have some very strong notions about the direction this Department is going to take, and about its role in the world and the

community of nations that are quite different from that which preceded us.

"There was an election, you know. It made some changes. So I can understand the concern that a highly skilled technician might have in responding to Congressional correspondence, not really knowing if that letter conveys what I really intended to say anyhow or not.

"It is a very difficult thing for you. Bear with me. We're going to work out a system by which we can short circuit this process. You know, I want to have mail answered quickly. And I don't think it needs to go through 15 different groups or offices. Unless it serves some public purpose, we're going to put an end to it. And probably have a mail control officer at the administrator's level that really knows my policy and that can work with you and we can develop a personal relationship here through agents so that we're all kind of talking the same story. We're going to do it directly and simply and promptly and not just bog this place down.

"You know I know about pink jackets and there are other jackets. And I know what the colors mean or used to, at least. I don't know if blue jackets still mean what they used to, but I'm familiar with the code system here--the buzz words. A lot of it doesn't make sense. So it is all up for grabs--the whole smear. If we can find a better, let's do it."

Employee: "Mr. Secretary, I have two questions. First, when will Ms. Foreman's appointment become permanent, and secondly, does the President still require you to read all the regulations, and if so, have you started yet?

Secretary Bergland: "Answer to the first question on Carol Foreman. I have recommended that she be appointed to head up a new mission in USDA, which will be generally titled Assistant Secretary for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Affairs. A brand new proposition. We're broadening our base in the Department. We're going to be involved with the Consumer Organizations, but not just for that purpose. That isn't why.

"I'm a farmer and consumers are my customers, not my enemy. We're not going to start fights. There'll be no more fights about the ungrateful consumer coming from my office. But rather respect for the consumer for what he or she really is. Because we're all the same. We're all consumers, even those who farm. We all consume. And so the consumer interest is a legitimate interest. It is as legitimate as the producer interest. They're the same, most often.

"And so Carol Foreman will be--I've recommended to be appointed to that post. It is a complicated process. The President requires that everyone of us who are Presidentially appointed, submit to an extensive, full FBI field check. I mean they talked to everybody literally and some of it might have gotten me into some trouble.

"You know I used to work in ASCS and that was an interesting life. They checked on people that I worked with then, some of whom didn't have the kindest thing to say about me. But anyhow, that is the way it goes and it takes time.

"I had to sign off on an income tax report. They've gone back into my income tax records, I don't know how far to see that I've paid. To see that I've paid the proper amounts and that I haven't taken any deductions I wasn't entitled to and in addition to that, I had to sign off on my property. I mean I had to transfer. We had some assets, but we had to set up a trust account and my son-in-law took over the farm. And I signed a paper that said when I leave this job as Secretary, I'll never work again--almost that way. Anyhow, this has been very, very complicated. It takes time and so Carol Foreman's nomination or name is in the process. I don't know where it is at. It is in there somewhere. It'll come, I hope, in due time. The sooner, the better."

"Now, your second questions on regulations. Do I read them? Yes. How long am I going to do that? Not any longer than I have to. And I've sent some back, too, may I say.

"We do examine these very carefully. The problem I have, of course, is that the regulations are scientific and legaleese, and for a reason, too. So we need to on one hand balance off the scientific and the legal requirements so in case an issue goes into a court of law, the lawyers are going to have to have some precise definitions that are acceptable in the profession. Otherwise, the matter would be meaningless. So, what we're really looking at though is finding some balance.

"You know I was on the Small Business Committee in the Congress and I was on the Committee that worked on the business of trying to revamp OSHA--The Occupational Safety and Health Act--a good Act, too. But in the design of the regulations, they incorporated, by reference, certain rules and standards and you ought to see it. I mean it was a mess. They had nine pages describing a safe step ladder. Nine pages. It wasn't just able to say a safe step ladder is this. It was nine pages in scientific and engineering terms.

"Well, a small contractor at home got hold of this thing and he wanted to be sure he complied with the law, and he wrote and got the regulations. He had this nine page treatise on what constituted a safe step ladder and he wrote to me and said I don't understand this. Here I was a member of Congress and a so-called big shot, and I couldn't understand it.

"I took it to an engineering study group in the Library of Congress and they couldn't understand it either. So here, we expect this poor fellow to figure out what he is supposed to do. That was an extreme case. But this is the kind of nonsense we're going to try and stop.

"Write it in a way that most people can at least have a good idea of what it is all about, so we don't have to hire a lawyer. I have nothing against lawyers, but it seems to me that we shouldn't have to hire a lawyer everytime we turn around in this business of dealing with government and that is really what this is all about. We want to make this thing, to the extent we can, an open institution that is understood.

"We have closed doors and we have these complicated things that we have done for 40 years or longer. Let's just stop that and see if we can do it a little better. So, I'm going to read those regulations until- I may not read everyone, but I've got a hunch now. I know where the problems are and I'm going to look at those--every single one of them.

Employee: "Mr. Secretary, most agencies in the Department of Agriculture have been studying the concept of flexitime for more than a year and they are still studying it. I was wondering could you get these agencies to reach decisions on flexitime one way or the other sometime in the near future?"

Secretary Bergland: "I hope so. I don't know what all the pitfalls are. I know some of the advantages and I don't know what the costs might be. I've got to find out more about this. But let's do it. Let's get it done with one way or the other. I'll do what I can. This will be on our agenda with OPEDA, with your officers, too. Here's an area where I'm not sure enough of my ground."

Employee: "Mr. Secretary, exactly what does the Department plan to do towards coordinating the Administration's commitment to employ blacks and other minorities in policy-making positions, say within the Department?"

Secretary Bergland: "This is a very difficult thing. I don't believe in quotas. I believe that they often produce more problems than they solve. The quota system is purely symbolic, anyhow. You can get a quota system. I know how that works.

"So we need to have an honest commitment. I'm honestly committed and I mean business. Those who we choose to be administrators will be honestly committed or I'll invite them to leave government. No games. Don't fool with me because I can be, if I need be, I

can be awfully hard boiled about these things. There are some things on which I will not relent. Civil rights is one. Equal opportunity....I will not relent, absolutely won't put up with excuses or apologizes. I want results and we're going to hold administrators responsible and accountable---Short of imposing quotas which I don't think work.

"That means we have to have men and women, Blacks, Chicanos, Norwegians, Irish. We're all minorities in the United States. Actually, we're all minorities. This is what makes this country so strong and so great. It is composed of minorities. It is governed by minorities. It is governed by coalition. Sometimes those coalitions take advantage of other minorities and that is where I put my foot down.

"So we have to respect the fact that we are different. We're all different, even those of us who are white males are not alike. Different ideas, different values, different goals, different objectives. That is the way God made us. I respect that. I am not going to issue quotas because I think for the reasons I've cited, it is not the way to do it.

"But I'm not exactly sure of the system. I think the system is going to be very subtle. I doubt that we're going to have forms, procedures, quotas, and guidelines and enforcement mechanisms. We can do that, too, but they're symbols--purely symbolic oftentimes to chase away the unsuspecting, or to try to get out from under an inquisitive examination.

"And our system will be much more subtle, but devastating to those who will resist it. Anybody who will resist it, will be invited to leave the government, at least this Department. I don't want them around. And civil service tenure or not, there are ways, you know."

Employee: "Mr. Secretary, I do coordinate your productivity programs and perhaps it is encouraging for the Department people to realize that the National Center for Productivity, which was headed up by our former Vice President, put out a report recently that showed that the federal government had increased its productivity in a nine year spread to 112%, which means that the output per employee year is up 12%. The Department of Agriculture will be putting one out very soon which will show we're up 16% in the same period. We don't measure everybody. We've got a control on about half the people.

"You mention that you are a new employee and I think that perhaps the ideas for improving productivity in this Department are probably in the minds of our new employees about six to eight months after they've been here. I think we're missing, perhaps, the boat by not taking them away, on a selective, maybe just a sample--pick a new employee after he has been here six to eight months and say what do you see that you think could be changed. Before he gets into the millstream. Before he becomes one of the crowd. What are your ideas about changing things? Have you been told what was expected of you? Are you producing to your expectancy? Are you above it?

"I think we miss the boat by not hitting the new employee after he has been here six to eight months. You will probably have many ideas in the next eight months as to things you think need to be changed in the Department, although you are not quite as new as some of the others. What do you think about an idea of hitting, just on a sample basis, a new employee. Pulling him away from his environment, away from his supervisor. Let him talk freely and tell you or one of your people what he thinks ought to be changed in his immediate area or around in the whole Department?"

Secretary Bergland: "I think it is a great idea. I don't know how to do it, but let's see if we can figure out a way. We don't want to develop a stifling environment where people are put into a mold and said--alright, well this is your job description.

"You know that is another thing I wonder if we really need it. Actually, you know,

what does it do? It gives you basic ground rules. It is kind of a basic contract and in that context it is probably okay. But some people regard a job description as the beginning and end of that which they do in a day's time. It ought not be that way.

"We do want to create an environment in which people are given an opportunity to speak their mind and to speak out and to do so without fear of intimidation or reprisal. I don't quite know how to do it, but we're sure going to work on it.

"Let's put that on the agenda, too, with OPEDA.

"May I say I'm pleased with that productivity report. It comes as no surprise though. I knew this outfit was good."

Employee: "Mr. Secretary, I am honored and privileged to have been here to listen to you and I want to thank you for the honesty with which you have projected yourself and the programs that you intend.

"I'm relatively new to government. My first year I was told in another agency that I'm on probation and therefore must not project any new ideas, even though I brought over 40 years of experience as a business and professional woman. I have a very long list of suggestions. It would be my privilege if you would permit me to write them down and send them to your office."

Secretary Bergland: "Would you please?"

Employee: "I would be very happy to."

Secretary Bergland: "Send them to Ms. Audrey Warren in my office and I'll be sure to see it."

Employee: "Thank you very much."

Employee: "Mr. Secretary, from what I understand from your answering of questions, you believe in delegation. I would just like to step aside and make a statement. Anyone who manages, for instance division directors who manage as many as 40 to 50 people must realize that he must delegate, and I wish that you would impress upon your people, under your management, that they must give people under them an opportunity to be creative on the division level. That they cannot get into the technicalities of each individual's job. That they should learn to delegate better. Thank you."

Secretary Bergland: "You made a very, very important contribution and delegation is a part of management skill. Managers who can't delegate are not managers. They ought not to ever be in the manager's position in the first place.

"So what I propose to do through the system and it will take us time for this to evolve and become apparent, but we're going to provide managers with authority. The authority they need and hold them accountable, be responsible for the results. And if the results aren't forthcoming, we'll get a new manager, and that's a fact.

"That means even if it is a Grade 13 supervisor. If the supervisor can't supervise, we'll find a new one. And therein is the problem. Sometimes in promotion, we tend to promote, not on the basis of always on that who has the greatest management potential, but promote on the basis of the person's technical ability, which sometimes is needed, often times is, but that is not the sole criteria.

"Management is a very difficult thing and a very responsible proposition and the only way I know of making it work is to give managers required authority and then hold them

accountable. If you can't make it work, we'll find somebody who can. The sort of atmosphere so that managers know that they are always under the gun and must produce. And if they don't delegate, of course, they are not going to produce. They will be confounded in their own red tape. And that means we'll just have to make some changes.

"Now that may mean that some persons who have tenure and who have held this job for a long, long time, may be displaced and that will be upsetting. I understand that and we have to be very sure then as we change managers that we do so on the basis of their skills or lack thereof, and not on the basis of their color, their sex, their politics, religion, or whatever other prejudice may be around. And we all have prejudices. I have my own. So it is a difficult management thing which we are going to work on very hard from the Administrators, Assistant Secretaries levels right on through the entire institution.

Employee: "Secretary Bergland, the United States Grain Standards Act of 1976 created a new agency in the Department, called The Federal Grain Inspection Service. My questions concerning that are these: How does the Administration feel about the creation of this new agency? Are there any plans to appoint an administrator soon? When will the freeze on personnel actions, GS-11 and above, be lifted, and what will this new agency do for space?"

Secretary Bergland: "I know about the new Grain Standards Act because I was on the Committee that wrote it, and one of the conferees that worked out the differences with the Senate, and was deeply involved in the design of the proposition. So I understand it.

"I understand the problems of the industry, that is the export industry, fairly well, and so there will be no question about its importance. We're now looking for an administrator that can land on the run. This is a big, high powered, complicated industry, and I know some of the shysters that are in the penitentiary or should be there. And we're not going to fool with it.

"Now this business of having clean grain produced on farms and moved through the warehouses of this country and down the barges of the Mississippi, and then to be some place after the time it is unloaded from the barges and unloaded again from a ship at a foreign port, and somehow, in the process, the addition of sawdust, moisture and sand, and sea shells, is an outrage.

"And we're going to put an end to that. We've changed the law. It is no longer a misdemeanor, it's a felony. I intend to prosecute anybody who plays games with us. And I'm not interested in a fine. I don't care. I want them to pay enough of a fine so it covers their board and room while they are in the pen. And that's where they're going to go. Now, so much for that part of it.

"We'll find an administrator who knows the nuances and knows the tricks and knows the industry and will be a person who can land with all skills required. There is no time for on the job training. It requires a special breed of cats. As soon as that administrator is chosen, we lift the ceiling grade on GS-11 and above.

"As to where it will be housed. Well, somebody was telling me they are going to add 350 federal employees in Washington to run that program. I've made it clear if we have to add those kinds of numbers here, we're going to move the whole thing to Kansas City. That will take care of the space problem. There is no grain loaded in Alexandria, Va. anymore.

"We're going to run a good show. We're going to run it efficient, tough and run it well. And we're going to put people in the field where they are needed and not add to a bureaucratic layer here. It would serve no purpose. I know that industry and I know the mission. So nobody will play games with me on that one. It will be a well run organization.

"Now, we have a space problem here in town. Buzzard Point. I promised the group when I met at the first of these meetings that I would go the Buzzard Point building. Tommy reminded me that I haven't been there yet, and I haven't, but I'm going to look at it with your officers and others in the Department. It looks to me like we've got a turkey on our hands.

"But I do have to tell you we do have a legitimate space problem that we have to deal with. I don't know yet how we're going to handle this, but we'll do the best we can by it. I can tell you I'm not a bit interested in going to Buzzard Point if it means that we have to get people out of public transportation and into car pools. That doesn't make sense. We won't do it. That is a fact.

"We want people to be able to go work using public transportation. We want to reduce the dependency on the automobile. That's what this is all about and to force people to go to private automobiles just to accommodate somebody doesn't make sense and I will resist it. We have suggested others. There are some agencies in town that we think could use that."

"I've got to go at 10 o'clock so we've got about six minutes."

Employee: "Mr. Secretary, you indicated your concern about EEO. Well there is a division under EEO which has been scheduled to be transferred and given over to the Department of Defense."

Secretary Bergland: "Yes sir, on the contract purchase program."

Employee: "On the contract and appliance division."

Secretary Bergland: "I'm aware of that."

Employee: "Well most of the employees there don't want to go, for sure. And we are concerned whether or not you are considering offering positions here at the Department of Agriculture to those employees who would rather not be transferred?"

Secretary Bergland: "Well, we have not really gotten into it to that detail yet. But the purpose in transferring this particular mission to the Department of Defense is that there is some duplication now between Agriculture and Defense in supervising compliance with these contractors. We could eliminate duplication efforts by having it in one place and somebody decided it should go to DOD.

"I don't know if that is right or wrong. We have about 50 employees involved. Am I correct? We haven't even started to talk about how to handle that problem yet, but we will. We must. Because we respect those who work in the agency and some might want to go, and I hope many would because we need that skill, and just transfer the skill. Anyhow, I think the group is now over in the Auditor's Building. Right. Okay, we'll talk about that later on because I'm concerned."

"We have time for one question."

Employee: "Mr. Secretary, I'm Jim Hall with the Extension Service, and you mentioned in answering one of the other questions that you envisioned some changes in policy toward our clientele. Now, all the questions about our internal operations here have been most interesting, but I would like to hear, just very briefly, some of the major shifts you see just in policy toward our clientele and who are our most important clientele as you see it in the Department of Agriculture. These are the reasons we are here. These people are the reasons we're here and I think we should be directed somewhat more towards serving them than serving ourselves."

Secretary Bergland: "That's a very good point. Our basic clientele of course, are the citizens of the United States. And to a growing extent, the citizens of this world. We intend to make some changes in the design and the administration of our global feeding programs.

"They started out to be surplus dumping operations and they became political clubs. We used rice to do certain things in that awful war in Southeast Asia, and we're going to put an end to that, too. We intend to use American abundance as developmental tools--not political weapons--to aid the world in it's quest for food and improved technology. We can't feel the world and we understand that. But we can use food as a developmental tool and we've commissioned the brightest and best minds in the United States to tell us how to do it. Now that we have the authority, we're going to write a new law.

"Number 2, our domestic constituency is, of course, the consuming public, including farmers. We're going to develop a food strategy for the United States in which a farm policy will be an important part. Because I think producers and consumers have a great deal in interest and in common. Much more than they have in disagreement.

"When I hear those stories peddled about how producers inevitably want high prices, and consumers inevitably want low prices and therefore all is lost, I laugh to myself. The story was written by someone who didn't know what they were talking about.

"Unfortunately, though, uninformed reporters have an impact upon public opinion. So I'm holding a press conference every day at 3 o'clock for one hour. Any reporter who wants to come has got an hour's time with me. It is open every single day and they know it. They are going to write stories about me anyhow and they might as well get it straight and get it from me. And I'm not running from anybody.

"We're therefore going to develop a food strategy program. There are 15 million poor people in the United States who spend about everything they have on groceries and I know what that is like. I've been through that mill.

"In 1954, 55, our crops were poor up in Minnesota, prices were low, we had a big mortgage, we had three kids, and we really had trouble keeping body and soul together. I couldn't find work. I couldn't find a job and I tried. I tried so hard and I couldn't find work to get an income to feed my kids. That was the kind of situation it was. We were four years in our home without running water. So I've been without a bathroom. I know what that is like.

"That fall, we had \$97 to our name and we had no job and we had a cold Minnesota winter coming on and so we pulled up and left and went to Florida to find work and spent most of that winter eating catfish that we caught, and orange juice which we picked off the ground. We found odd jobs and stayed alive. So I know what that is like. I will never, ever again say to the American Consumer, that you never had it so good because it is not true.

"I never had it so good. Best job I ever had. I was paid \$44,600 as a member of Congress. Best job I ever had and now I'm getting \$67 grand, probably more than I'm worth, and I spend 2 to 3% of my income for food. But I represent those who want to stay alive. I respect that and I'm appreciative of the kinds of life they lead, and so I'm not going to chase the food stamp program out of USDA. We're going to keep it right here. We know how to run it. We can run it well and we can do the best job of any agency or department in this government. I am convinced of that.

"So we're going to develop a food policy here that helps people who are in need and stop some of the clap trap that has been going on over the years. It just doesn't make sense. We're not going to be issuing pious pronouncements that tend to be misleading. We're going to level with the American public. We never again are going to issue a

crop report that assumes normal weather. Because there ain't no such thing. We're going to give perimeters, give the range that this is what may happen if these things take place. And play it straight. And so our constituency will be broadened. Our interests will be expanded. There'll be no simple solutions. No easy black and white choices anymore for any of us.

"All of you are going to be tested, and tested, and tested, and examined in everyway and asked to produce ideas and innovative techniques that meet the world as it really is. The real world out there and not some dream world that we want it to be, but the real world that we can measure and establish strategies that do make sense and try to keep this globe from exploding. The U. S. Department of Agriculture will play an important and leading role in that great effort."

"Thank you very much."

